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INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification <sup>6</sup> : H04Q 11/04, H04B 7/185	A1	(11) International Publication Number: WO 98/48593
		(43) International Publication Date: 29 October 1998 (29.10.98)

(21) International Application Number: PCT/GB98/01142

(22) International Filing Date: 17 April 1998 (17.04.98)

(30) Priority Data:

9707832.3	18 April 1997 (18.04.97)	GB
9716331.5	1 August 1997 (01.08.97)	GB

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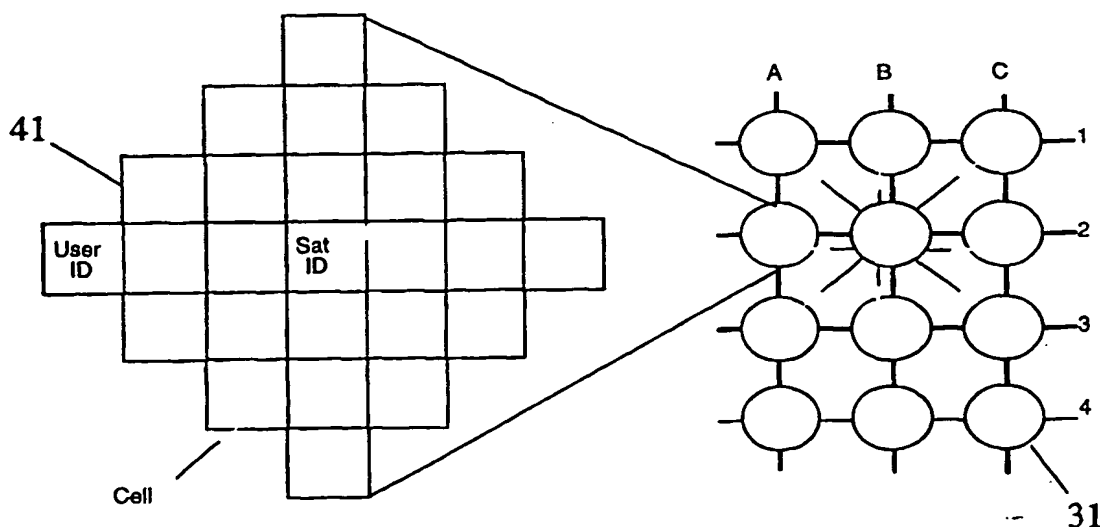
(81) Designated States: CA, JP, US, European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE).

Published

*With international search report.*

*Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of the receipt of amendments.*

(54) Title: CONNECTIONLESS COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK



(57) Abstract

A non-geostationary satellite connection-less network incorporates a plurality of satellite nodes and ground stations in communication with the nodes. The network is modelled by the corresponding virtual model network. In the virtual network, connections between users are available between virtual nodes and are made according to a restricted set of routing plans based on the modelled virtual paths between those nodes. The virtual model provides a means of determining admission of connection-orientated calls of different quality of service (QoS) traffic class requirements into the network with engineered grade of service (GoS) and QoS guarantees.

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## CONNECTIONLESS COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

This invention relates to a connectionless communication network and in particular to an arrangement and method for providing communication in a network structure comprising a ground network and satellite links.

### 5 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Satellite communications systems employing geostationary satellites carrying traffic between ground stations are well established. Although such systems are effective in operation, they suffer from two limitations. Firstly, a geostationary satellite occupies an equatorial orbit and thus its 'footprint' may  
10 not extend to higher latitudes. Secondly, a large number of geostationary satellites have already been installed and there are now very few orbital positions available for new satellites. To address these problems, there are recent proposals to provide satellite systems in which non-geostationary satellite nodes co-operate with a ground-based network to form a global  
15 communications system.

A method of providing communications in a system employing non-geostationary satellites is described in specification No US-A-5,621,415. In that arrangement, the satellite footprints are partitioned into linear spanning cells  
20 containing multiple linear segments to reduce the hand-off overhead.

Our co-pending United Kingdom patent application No 9707832.3 (Rosenberg 1) filed 18 April 1997 and our co-pending application (ref.ID0799) of even date relate to a connectionless communications network for transporting broad band  
25 services requiring quality of service (QoS) guarantees and for ensuring that the service maintains the quality of service determined at the start of a communication session throughout the duration of that session. In those applications, moving satellite nodes are accommodated by maintaining a virtual model of the network having fixed virtual nodes to control packet routing.  
30 Routing of packets is performed with reference to the virtual network. By

Another aspect of this invention is a method to manage congestion and QoS requirements of connectionless sessions in a connection-less network.

- 5 A further aspect of this invention is the combination of reserved and on-demand bandwidth allocation to different traffic QoS classes in a network using TDMA access.

- 10 A further aspect of this invention is mechanism that allows TDMA satellite networks to remain stateless, by providing mechanisms that relate to call state and admission control and congestion management to reside on the ground.

- 15 The invention further provides a means for call admission control and connection management in such a preferred embodiment, and includes the alternative embodiments where the user network interface may be ATM, PDH or SDH based.

- 20 In a further aspect, the invention provides a connectionless network having means for accommodating a plurality of different quality of service (QoS) traffic class requirements, the network having means for allocating reserved access bandwidth to traffic in a first group of quality of service classes, and means for allocating on-demand access bandwidth to traffic in a second group of quality of service classes.

## 25 **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

An embodiment of the invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:-

- 30 Figure 1 is a schematic diagram of a satellite network according to a preferred embodiment of the invention;

Figure 2 illustrates an example of segregation of services into different classes of quality of service (QoS) criteria for traffic;

5 Figure 3 illustrates the principle of a virtual model as applied to the satellite network of figure 1;

Figure 4 illustrates in schematic form the relationship between the virtual model of figure 3 and the corresponding real satellite network;

10 Figure 5 illustrates the principle of a modelled virtual path employed in the virtual model of figure 3;

Figure 6 illustrates a connection control function based on B-ISDN signalling employed in the network of figure 1;

15 Figure 7 illustrates a possible scoping or deployment of the connection control entities for the satellite network of figure 1;

20 Figure 8 illustrates a bandwidth and admission plan for the network of figure 1;

Figure 9 illustrates the concept of a Virtual Virtual Circuit for handling traffic of QoS class 3 in the network of figure 1; and

25 Figure 10 illustrates the protocol of the AAL2 ATM adaptation layer.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENT**

Referring first to figure 1, the network comprises an array of non-geostationary satellites 11 interconnected by inter-satellite communications links 12 between adjacent satellites. These inter-satellite links will typically comprise microwave links carrying a number of communication channels. Typically, the satellites will

30

predominantly phase sensitive, the services jitter allowance may be small at the delay-sensitive end of the spectrum, and traffic shaping mechanisms may be in use at receive buffers.

- 5 QoS class 3 is a guaranteed delivery traffic class for which the delay and jitter values are sacrificed for a high probability or close to assured delivery. This is achieved by flow control in which *a priori* there is no guarantee when a cell will be delivered, only that, if once admitted to the network, then it will be delivered with a high probability of success. Example services in this class are medical
- 10 image or general file transfer, electronic mail and fax. Class 3 services may or may not be human interactive, in the sense that responsiveness may or may not be required. To that extent the services are not necessarily call-based, but are usually session or stream-based, and therefore connection-orientated. However, this is not always a specific requirement. During a significant
- 15 connection or session duration the traffic is fully or partially flow-controlled to ensure delivery without having to over-provide bandwidth. In a short transaction, connection-orientation and flow control may not be necessary, since full retransmission is viable.
- 20 QoS class 4 is a non-guaranteed delivery traffic class, for which no bounds on delay, jitter or error incidence are specified, nor are they expected to be negotiable. The network may admit the traffic but makes no contract that the cell will be delivered. The goal is to sacrifice delay for some degree of delivery assurance, or complete loss. Services that could use this class are hotly
- 25 debated in ATM circles, but bearing in mind that the application performs the error/loss mitigation, some possible examples are client-server backup, network clock synchronisation, and the "best-effort" Internet protocol in general, where the service application does not require a significant QoS guarantee. Delay will be in fact bounded by implementation. If a cell is not lost due to congestion it
- 30 can only be delayed worst-case by the accrued maximum buffer length in the switching nodes it has traversed. The services using this class do not have to be connection-orientated or call based.

Our co-pending applications referred to above describe a network model in which connection-orientation and reservation may be maintained in a connectionless network, the preferred embodiment being a connectionless LEO satellite network in which the satellites are moving, and therefore there are topology changes. The preferred embodiment described herein is a modelled virtual path that describes the community-of-interest between endpoints held in a virtual model in preferentially ground-based connection control.

10 The network of figure 1 is modelled by the corresponding virtual model network shown in figure 3. In the virtual network of figure 3, connections between users 30 are available between virtual nodes 31 and are made according to a restricted set of routing plans based on the modelled virtual paths between those nodes. This is illustrated in figure 3 which illustrates the use of ground-based connection control 32 and figure 4 which illustrates the relationship between the real satellite network and the ground-based virtual model. As shown in figure 4, the ground-based model provides a fixed mapping between a set of cells and a modelled virtual node. Hand-over of cells means that modelled nodes may be distributed over up to nine satellites. Ownership of a particular cell 41 identifies a satellite node as embodying the ground-based model of that virtual node. Ownership of cells is broadcast to all adjacent nodes so that the location is visible from the satellite embodying the ground image. The example shown by way of illustration in figure 3 is of a "dogleg" or angular connection. In order to support these routing plans, a mesh of virtual connections may link all satellites according to a certain topology. For a network with a small number of satellites a full mesh would be provided. For a network with a larger number as illustrated here, the mesh could include all satellites within the same constellation and in addition a further mesh of virtual connections linking all satellites which form a line of latitude around the world.

30 These routing plans appear in the model as modelled virtual paths of defined capacity or statistical capability. Each virtual node is connected to every other virtual node by means of a set of these modelled virtual paths. The capacity of

the set of modelled virtual paths linking a pair of virtual nodes is determined by traffic analysis of the community of interest between the nodes and is subject to regular re-engineering as the network or its usage evolves. The relationship between the virtual and real networks is further illustrated in figure 5 which illustrates the principle of modelled virtual paths and shows the relationship between the real satellite nodes 11 and the corresponding virtual nodes 31 of the modelled network.

The connection control function in the network of figure 1 is illustrated in figure 6. Each user 60 has a signalling link 62 to an allocated connection control (CC) 63 which models the part of the network within which that user resides. Connection control nodes are fully interconnected with semi-permanent signalling links 64, and a connection request is allocated capacity on a modelled virtual path which, as it is ATM like in its behaviour, allows the use of standard B-ISDN signalling between the connection control entities, this being illustrated in figure 6. Connection control entities are provided at a small number of physical locations and control connections using an object model of all allocable resources within their section of the network. Connection control functions can be centralised on a continental scale, for which scaling of computer capacity is not a problem by the use of object models. Furthermore if connection control entities are located in low demand traffic areas, then signalling traffic congestion is avoided. A possible scoping or deployment of the connection control function (CC) is illustrated in Figure 7. Most connections can be made with a pair-wise communication between two connection controls. Exceptionally, a third connection control can grant through capacity as a transit virtual connection.

A typical QoS classes bandwidth and admission policy is illustrated in the diagram of figure 8. This figure illustrates a plan for bandwidth reservation for on-demand access and for the reservation of bandwidth in the core network as a basis for call admission control and congestion management. As shown in this figure, classes 1 and 2 use reserved access bandwidth. Call admission



control (CAC) calculates the blocking probability based on the traffic shape/re-shaping based on the calls in progress. Classes 3 and 4 use on-demand access bandwidth. Here, call admission control calculates mean or maximum effective bandwidth. Class 3 may in some applications have reserved  
5 bandwidth. The maximum/mean bandwidth values for classes 1, 2 and 3 can be recorded per cell and transferred to the corresponding satellite which keeps a running balance.

To satisfy the requirement for reservation of bandwidth and to ensure a stable  
10 route, QoS class 1 and 2 traffic must be connection-orientated. The modelled virtual path defined herein forms a basis on which the call admission control policies of the B-ISDN ATM model may be adapted to the admission of calls to the network of QoS class 1 and 2 defined herein. To ensure capacity is not over-subscribed, call admission control (CAC), provides a means of bandwidth  
15 accounting which is performed at connection set-up. The modelled virtual paths furthermore ensure that all traffic is routed in the same way in the virtual model such that only limited path-length change artefacts need be compensated, for example satellite hand-off. By assigning a higher traffic queue scheduling priority to class 1 services over class 2 services, and  
20 restricting these two classes to no alternative path routing during a call by virtue of the modelled virtual path, we have found that a connectionless network can satisfy all the criteria of QoS classes 1 and 2.

The CAC and the available capacities of the modelled virtual and physical paths  
25 controls the grade of service of the network. A given CAC responds to QoS class 1 and 2, and the selected transfer capability at call request, and determines from the available capacity (and functional boundary conditions) how many new calls can be admitted to the network. The accuracy of the CACs will contribute to the overall GoS and in part the realised QoS. If there is  
30 an abundance of Class 1 traffic calls, then the Class 1 and Class 2 CACs will admit fewer calls for a given remaining capacity shared between the classes. Essentially this call-blocking rate will depend at any moment on the utilisation

and classes of all the established calls. It is not wrong to reject calls, but this can represent a poor GoS and the network preferably needs more capacity.

Using the above operation we now describe the treatment given to the full  
5 complement of the previously described QoS classes in a connectionless network, the preferred embodiment being a LEO satellite network. It will however be appreciated that the technique is not restricted to this number of QoS classes which may be subdivided e.g. by criteria, traffic queue scheduling priority, nor is the technique restricted to LEO satellite networks. Unlike QoS  
10 classes 1 and 2, QoS class 3 requires flow control to ensure delivery without over-provisioning resources. In a stateless satellite space-segment, where the definition of statelessness is defined to be holding no connection or bandwidth reservation details onboard a satellite, there is no facility to flow control traffic. QoS class 3 services use a transport protocol with a goal of delivering a stream  
15 of information intact, at the expense of delay. ATM available bit rate (ABR) transfer capability has a small loss probability, but if necessary this can be teased out by a light-weight higher protocol operating end to end. Both ABR and TCP (transport control protocol) transport protocols are connection-orientated and fully flow-controlled and attempt to establish QoS class 3  
20 performance in their respective network contexts. ABR is based on credit or rate-based flow-control; cells are flow-controlled link-by-link. TCP by contrast uses end-to-end flow control.

To support ABR, the network would have to meet an almost certain delivery  
25 criterion once having admitted an ABR transfer capable ATM cell. Implementing link-by-link flow control as per ATM would violate the stateless criterion on board. Furthermore, link-by-link back-pressure alone in a connectionless space segment is likely to cause unwieldy re-sequencing requirements at a destination terminal, and is likely to impose large buffers  
30 throughout the network. Without any internal flow control mechanisms, a connectionless network there will have uncontrolled be packet loss when congested, and not meet the delivery criterion for this service QoS class.

Simply substituting the ABR link-by-link with end-to-end flow control, by essentially treating the network as one long link, requires accommodating significant round-trip delay, and requires a special priority for resource allocation cells that provide the credits in an ATM network. With this approach, the "passive" intermediate nodes (satellites) would have to ensure that merging traffic does not cause congestion and cell loss.

TCP's goal is higher than ATM's ABR transfer capability as it tolerates no packet loss. TCP is already based on end-to-end flow control. However, TCP actually has many different implementations. These vary widely in retransmission policies, time-out durations and back-off strategies. There is no easy way to contain or manage the traffic in terms of the number or spread of users, and since any error incidence provokes a retransmission. Consequently the network is exposed to unmanageable congestion and this will impact the QoS of classes 1 and 2.

Dynamic routing policy decisions can smooth traffic but not contain it. The MAC layer of TDMA access policy is insufficient to contain traffic either over a distributed network, since at some point, not necessarily distant, congestion will occur where traffic merges. Furthermore, if the MAC protocol is shaping traffic, then TCP may have to be modified to account for this local flow-control, and if the flow control is applied too rigorously, throughput will suffer due to carrying both redundant packets and their retransmission.

The preferred method illustrated in figure 9 to manage QoS class 3 traffic is by an effective maximum or mean bandwidth reservation end to end using the modelled virtual path concept. The network may reserve a certain effective bandwidth to meet some delay criteria, although not strictly necessary, and made available through a call admission control policy. With bandwidth reservation, flow control need only be performed locally at source. Bandwidth reservation could be performed at a VC level in terms of an individual session,

or in the preferred embodiment at the modelled VP level, for which there would be sufficient aggregation of traffic. This effective bandwidth is maintained by full traffic shaping at source, and may be re-negotiated according to demand. Traffic shaping is implemented by the MAC protocol on the TDMA, which for

5 QoS class 3 services operates a full or partial on-demand reservation service.

ATM ABR services therefore operate the flow control on an uplink access to the satellite network, but subsequently use the reserved bandwidth of the modelled VP in the core to ensure delivery. For TCP services that require QoS class 3,

10 the access link flow control is combined with a virtual virtual Circuit (VVC), which is a virtual circuit in a stateless-connectionless network. The VVC is a model that describes a virtual circuit or community of interest between endpoints - there may be more than a pair - which is defined by a certain amount of bandwidth reservation that may be re-negotiated, and a persistence

15 of state at the endpoints in the terminal equipment. The VVC may find application in LAN interconnect, VPN/EN Corporate Intranet and ISP to ISP applications.

A suitable ATM cell format in which AAL-2 minicells are multiplexed into ATM

20 cells is illustrated by way of example in figure 10.

The VVC may be semi-permanent in which case it is configured, or it may be set-up on demand, i.e. signalled like a call. The VVC uses a lightweight protocol to establish individual sessions, and there may be several

25 simultaneous sessions multiplexed in a given VVC. Traffic is transported by short variable length packets or in a preferred embodiment by the ITU AAL-2. The VVC persists longer than TCP or UDP sessions, such that it can provide a framework for routing connectionless (UDP) or connection-orientated sessions (TCP). This ensures that there is a defined routing policy between endpoints

30 for these protocols, to manage congestion in the network. The AAL-2 Negotiation Procedures are a suitable lightweight protocol for establishing TCP sessions. The packets external to the network may be adapted to AAL-2 for

transport in the network. A TCP session is then equivalent to an AAL-2 channel ID, and the TCP header could be dropped at the source network termination. UDP could keep its header and use an AAL-2 special reserved channel ID for all UDP transfers.

5

QoS class 4, can be assigned the lowest traffic priority such that it does not impinge on the other three QoS classes. The behaviour is then equivalent to the Internet best effort. However, the other three QoS classes are unaffected by the behaviour or the congestion of the fourth. They therefore provide the opportunity to handle applications according to there QoS requirements. QoS class 4 uses on-demand bandwidth on an uplink to a satellite network or a connectionless network using TDMA, and need not have any effective bandwidth reservation.

15 Capacity allocations are controlled by the call admission control, which for a stateless satellite network must be ground-based for QoS classes 1 and 2, and to cater for the effective bandwidth portion of class 3. It is not necessary to restrict the percentage capacity of classes 1 and 2 to any particular fixed values, except for functional constraints such as hand-off. By renegotiating a percentage capacity for the QoS classes individually, then different GoS can be achieved for each QoS.

Congestion management for QoS class 4 operates in sympathy with call admission control for QoS classes 1 and 2 and possibly class 3 traffic.

25 Congestion management is equivalent to a function of IP routers that perform a dynamic controlled routing algorithm (e.g. OSPF) that updates the routing tables. Since CAC is ground-based, and congestion management's flow-control and advertising mechanisms would violate a stateless network criterion, then the congestion management needs to be ground-based and collocated.

30 QoS class 4 traffic can be alternately routed in the network with reference to only local indications of congestion within a node and routing policy decisions made by the congestion management which either puts an explicit routing

policy in each packet, or implicit destination based routing and context driven tables inside the nodes of the network.

QoS classes 1 and 2 have reserved bandwidth on a TDMA uplink, and in the  
5 core network. QoS class 3 may use a combination of reserved bandwidth or on-demand bandwidth on a TDMA uplink and effective bandwidth reservation in the core network. QoS class 4 operates only on-demand based bandwidth reservation on a TDMA uplink and has no a priori bandwidth reservation in the network operating on best effort principles. A satellite would not need to hand-  
10 off or retain a record of any bandwidth reservations. A ground based cell equipment can and keep this record, and as it is inherited by a physical node it can communicate this succinct information to the satellite. The satellite keeps running totals for the bandwidth reservations for the QoS classes separately and can use this to drive the on-demand allocations for the uplink.

15

It will be understood that the above description of a preferred embodiment is given by way of example only and that various modifications may be made by those skilled in the art without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

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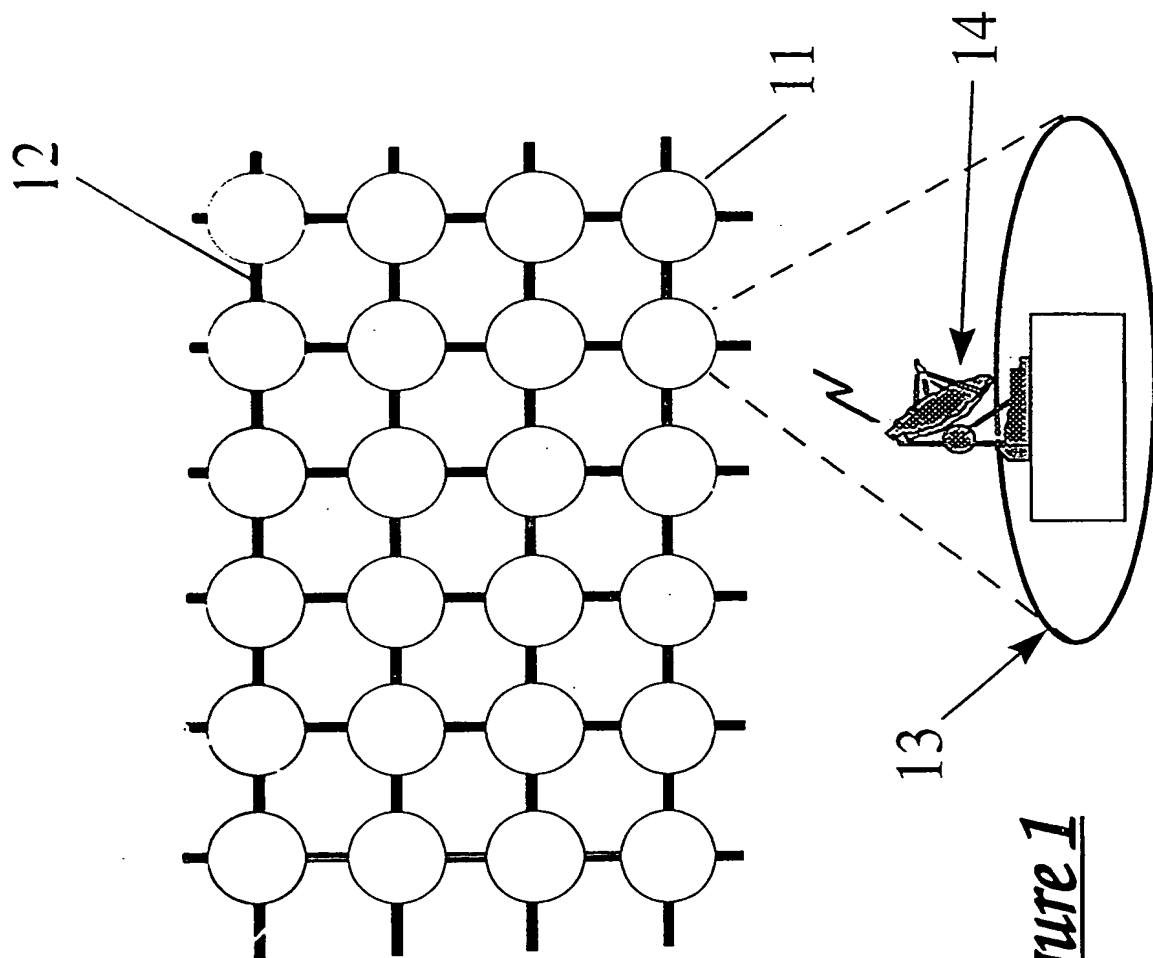
**CLAIMS:**

1. A method of admitting connection-orientated calls of different quality of service (QoS) traffic class requirements into a connection-less network with predetermine grade of service (GoS) and QoS guarantees, the method  
5 including providing a virtual model of the network, and determining admission control from said virtual network.
2. A method of managing congestion and QoS requirements of connectionless sessions in a connection-less network without impacting the  
10 QoS of connection-orientated services, the method including providing a virtual model of the network, and determining admission control from said virtual network.
3. A method as claimed in claim 1 or 2, and including combining reserved  
15 and on-demand bandwidth allocation to different traffic QoS classes in a network using TDMA access.
4. A method as claimed in claim 1, 2 or 3, wherein said virtual network is used to define virtual virtual circuits corresponding to virtual circuits in the real  
20 network.
5. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein connectionless traffic is aggregated and shaped to conform to stabilised distribution whereby to admit said connectionless traffic and manage that traffic in the network.  
25
6. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein traffic in a first group of quality of service classes is allocated reserved access bandwidth.
7. A method as claimed in claim 5, wherein traffic in a second group of  
30 quality of service classes is allocated on-demand access bandwidth.

8. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 7, wherein the nodes of said network comprise non-geostationary satellites.
9. A method as claimed in claim 8, wherein said satellite nodes are  
5 stateless and wherein call state and admission control and congestion management is performed on the ground network.
10. A connectionless network having means for accommodating a plurality of different quality of service (QoS) traffic class requirements, the network having  
10 means for allocating reserved access bandwidth to traffic in a first group of quality of service classes, and means for allocating on-demand access bandwidth to traffic in a second group of quality of service classes.

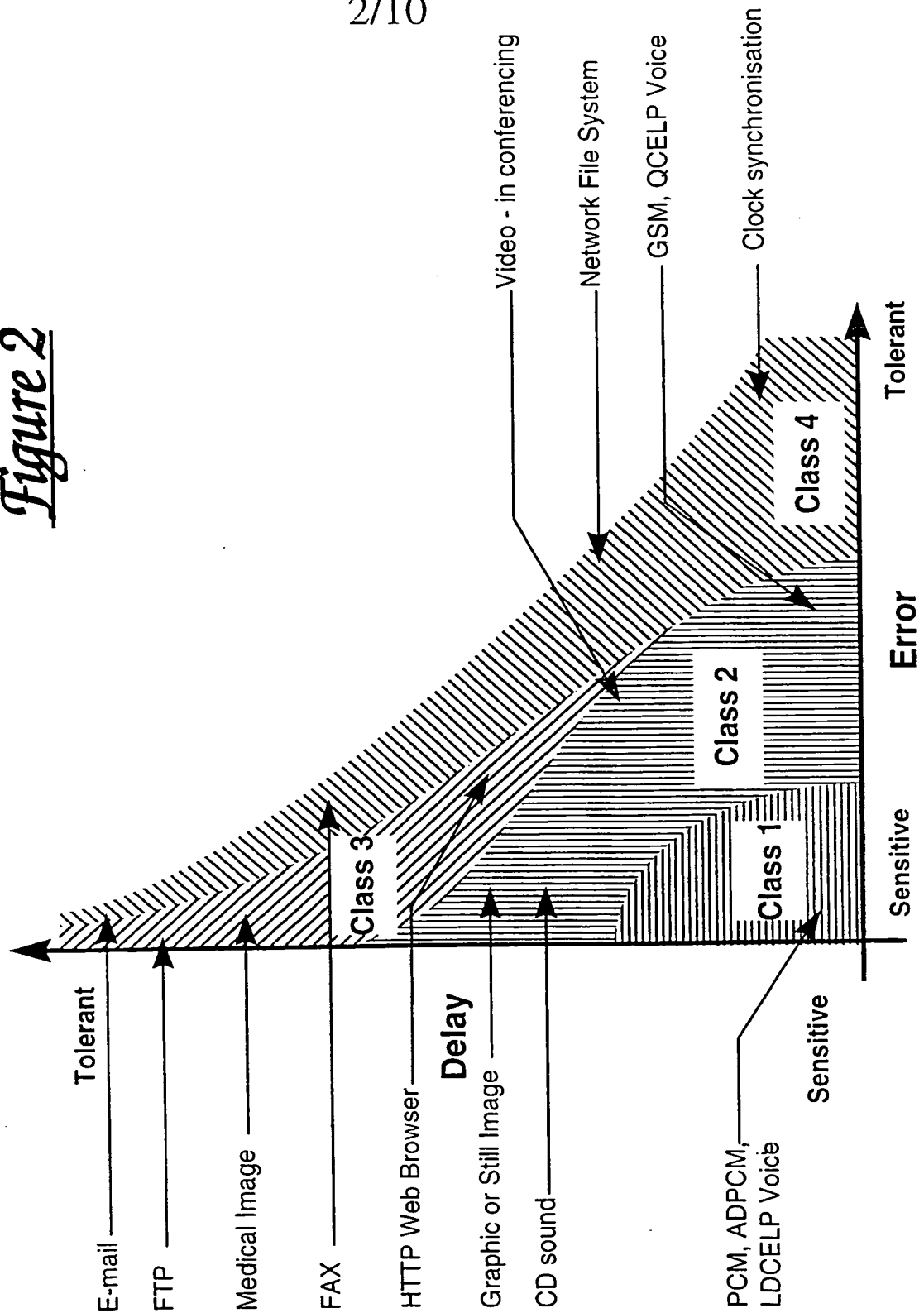


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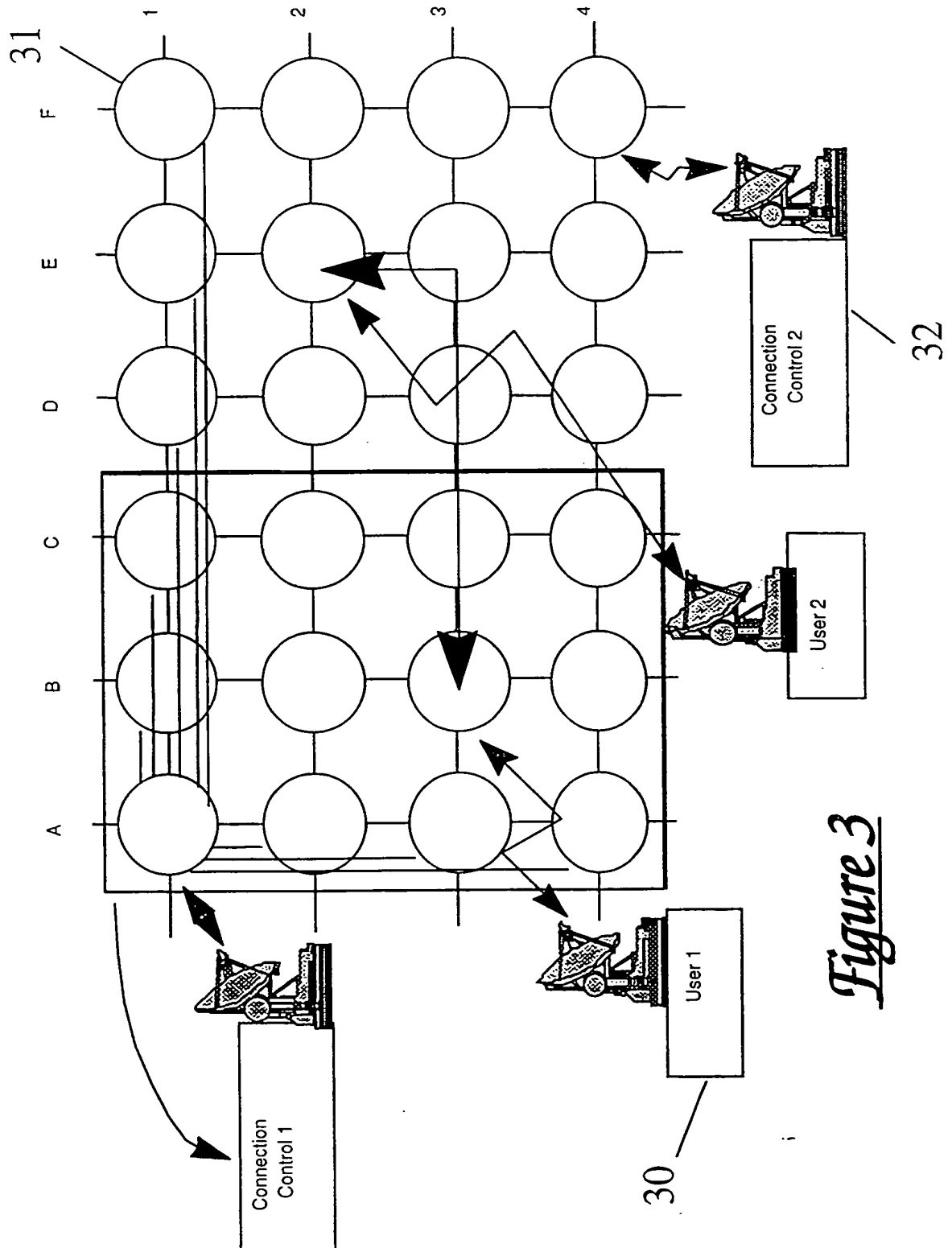
*Figure 1*

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*Figure 2*

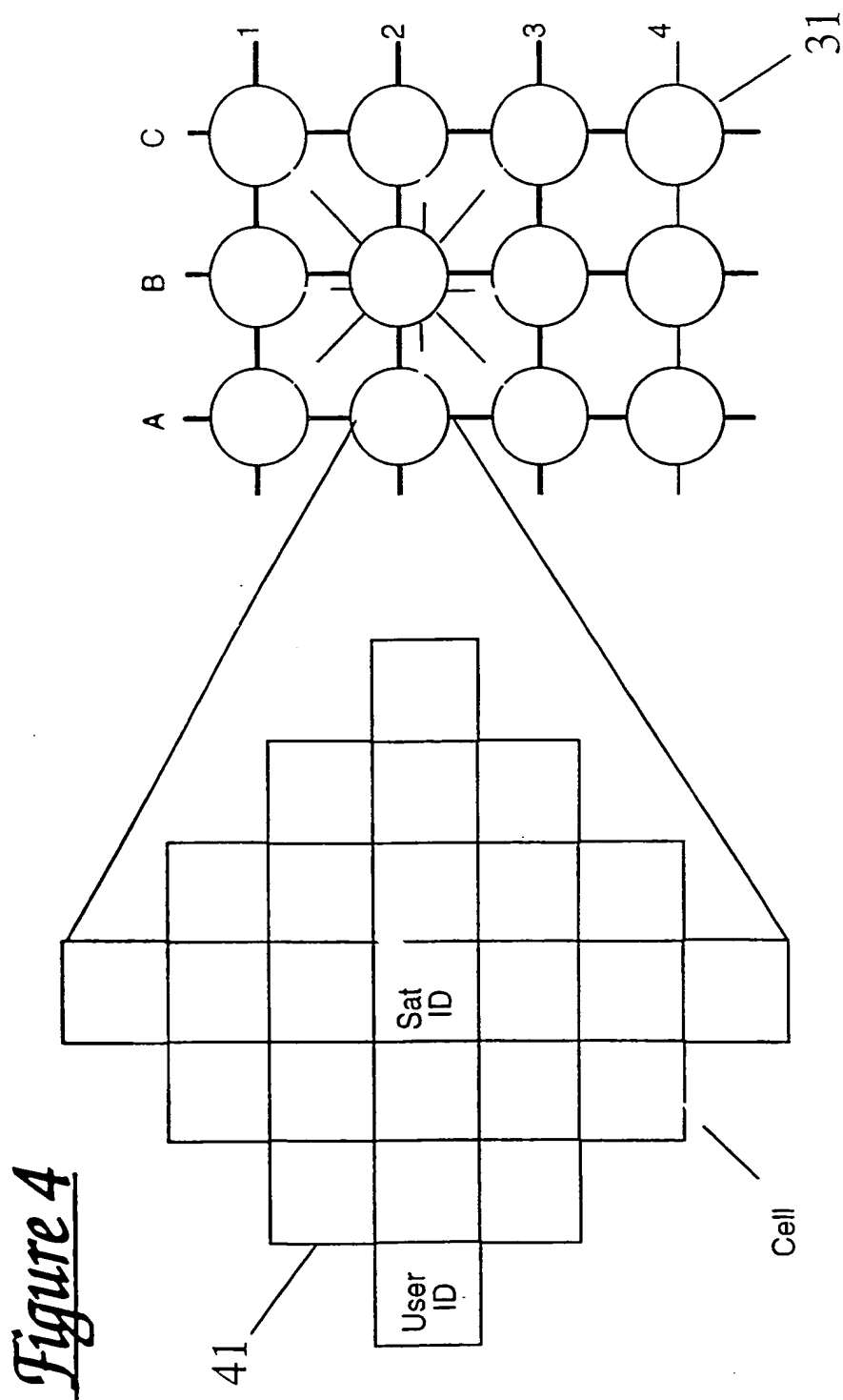


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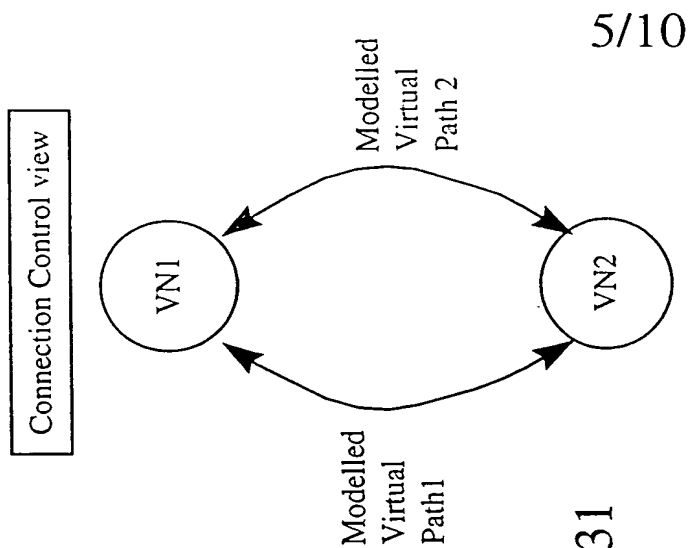
*Figure 3*

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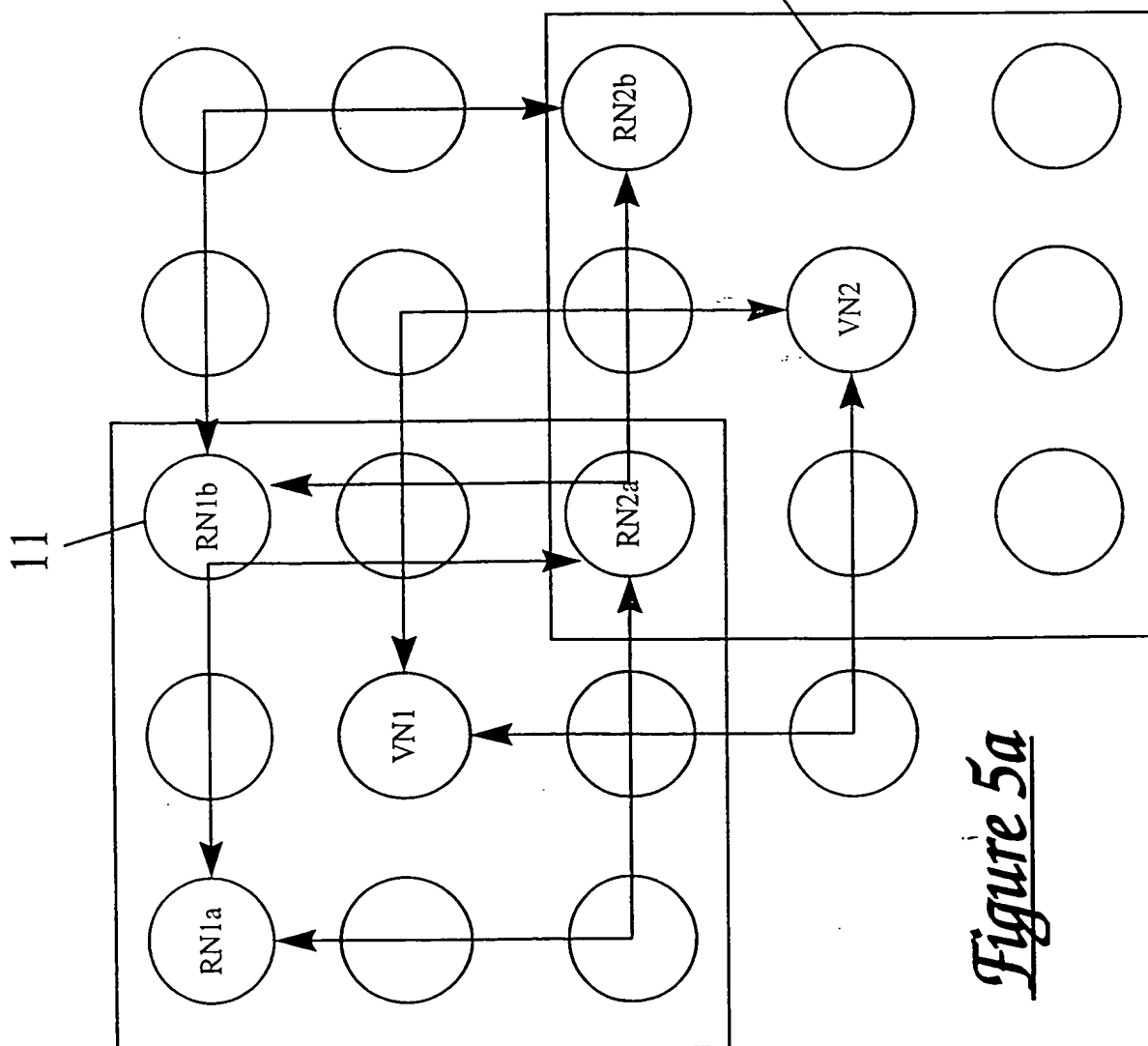


**Figure 4**

*Figure 5b*

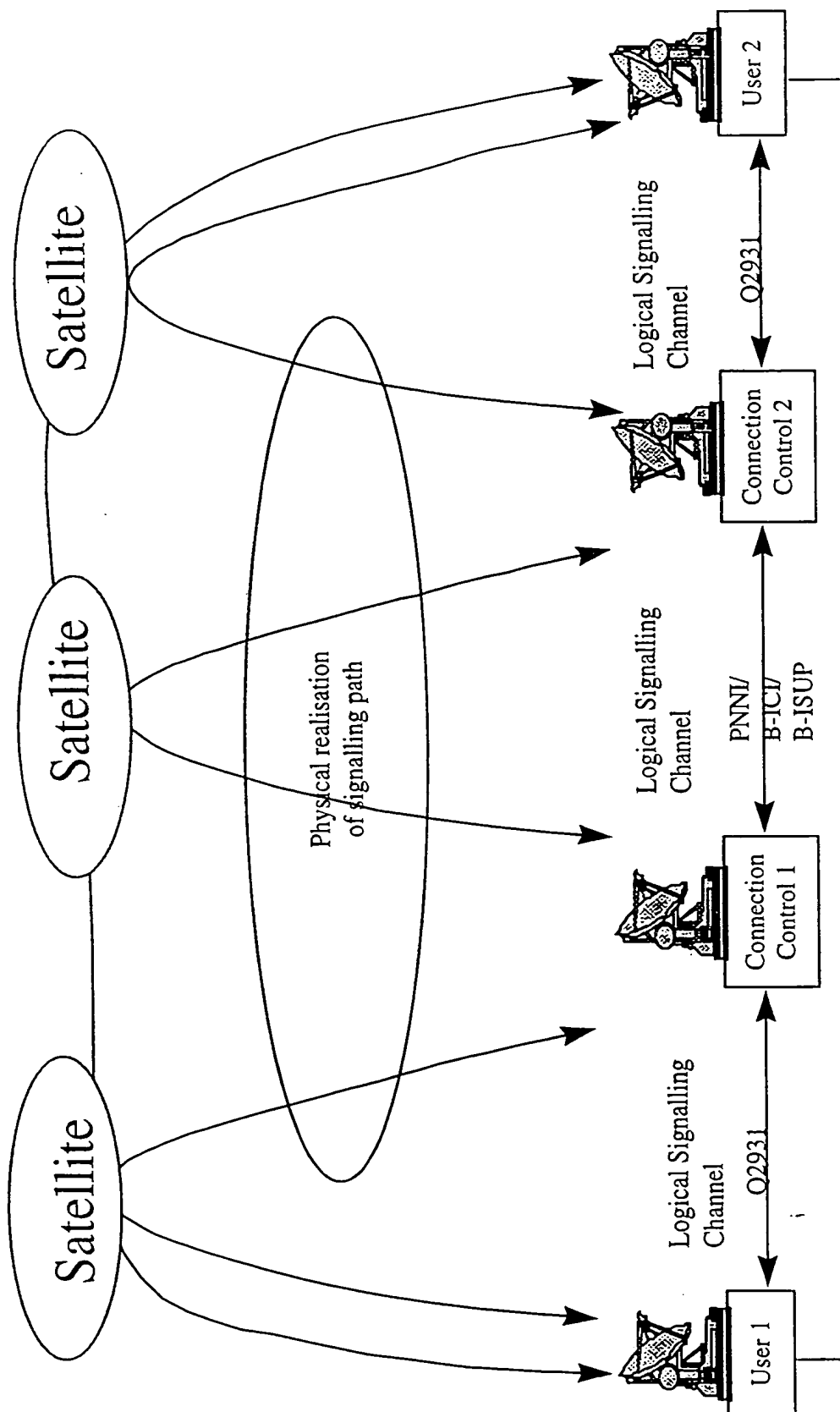


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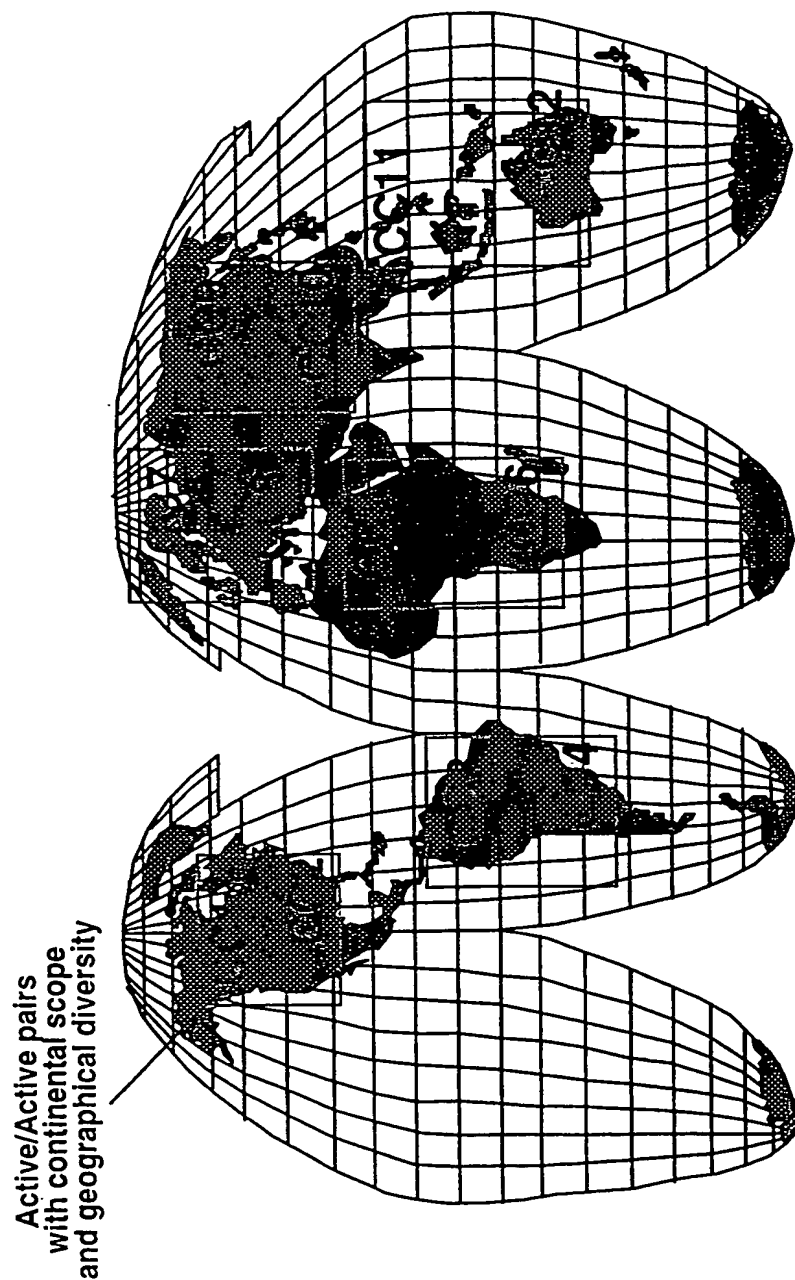


*Figure 5a*

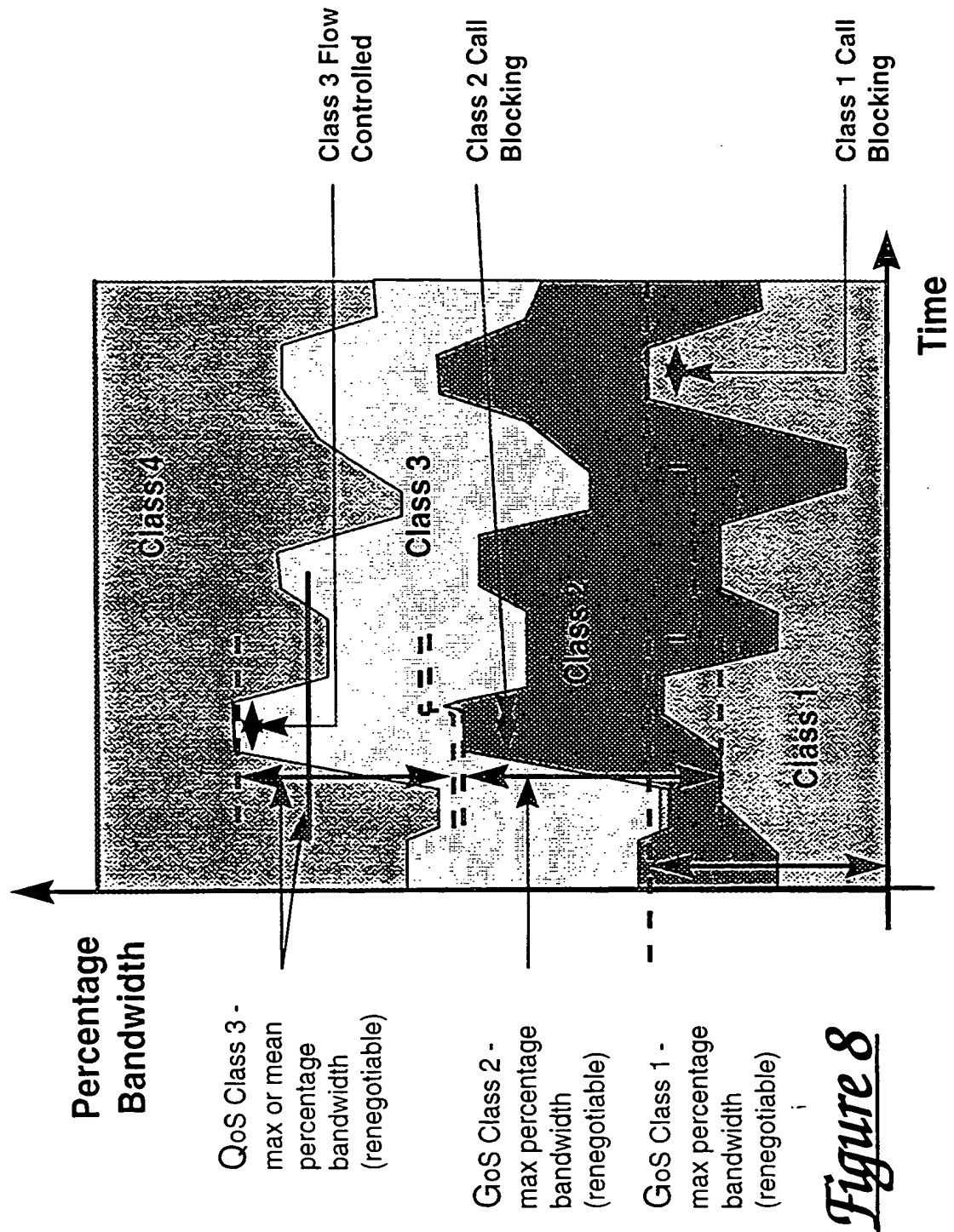
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*Figure 6*

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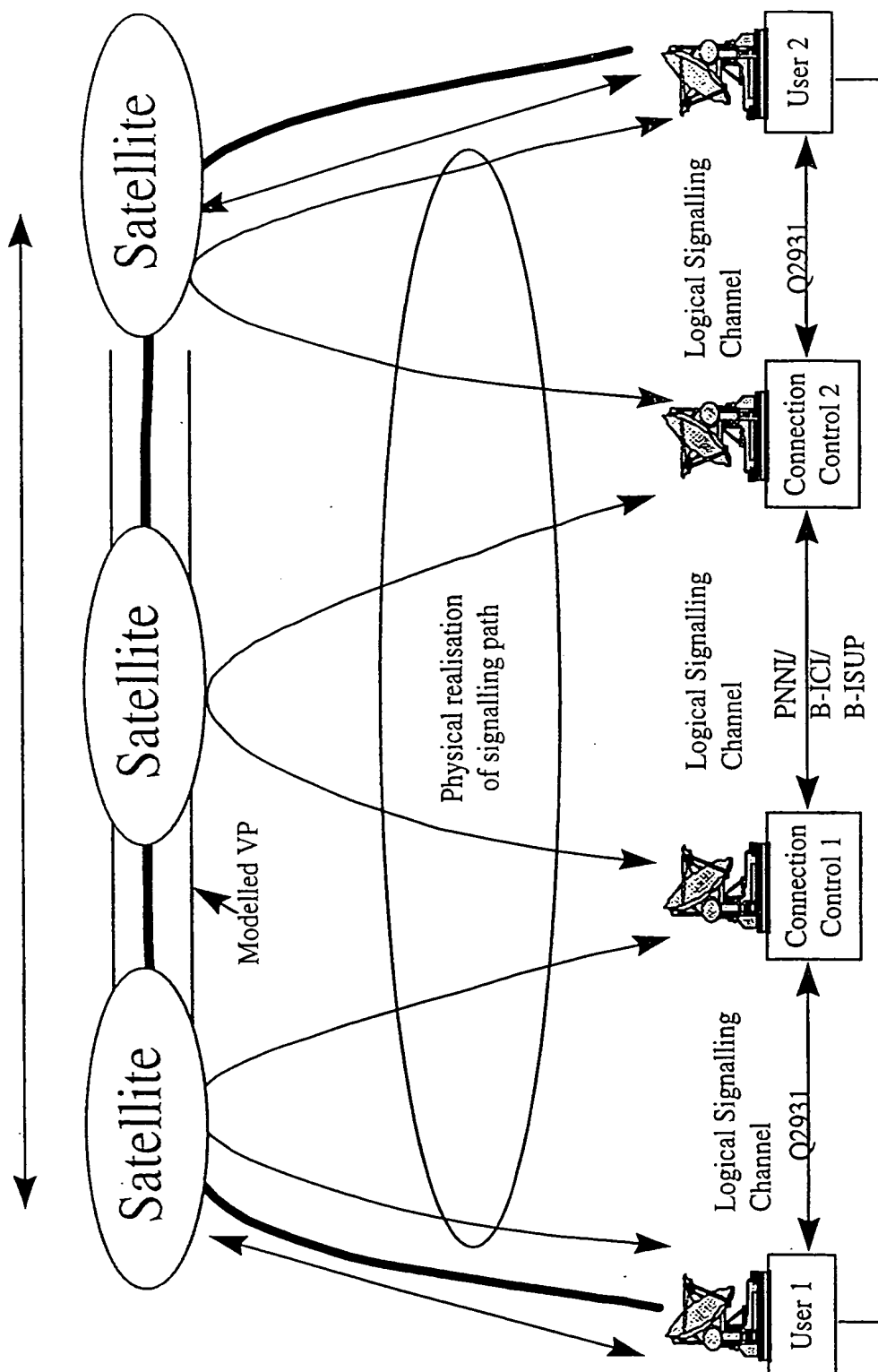
*Figure 7*



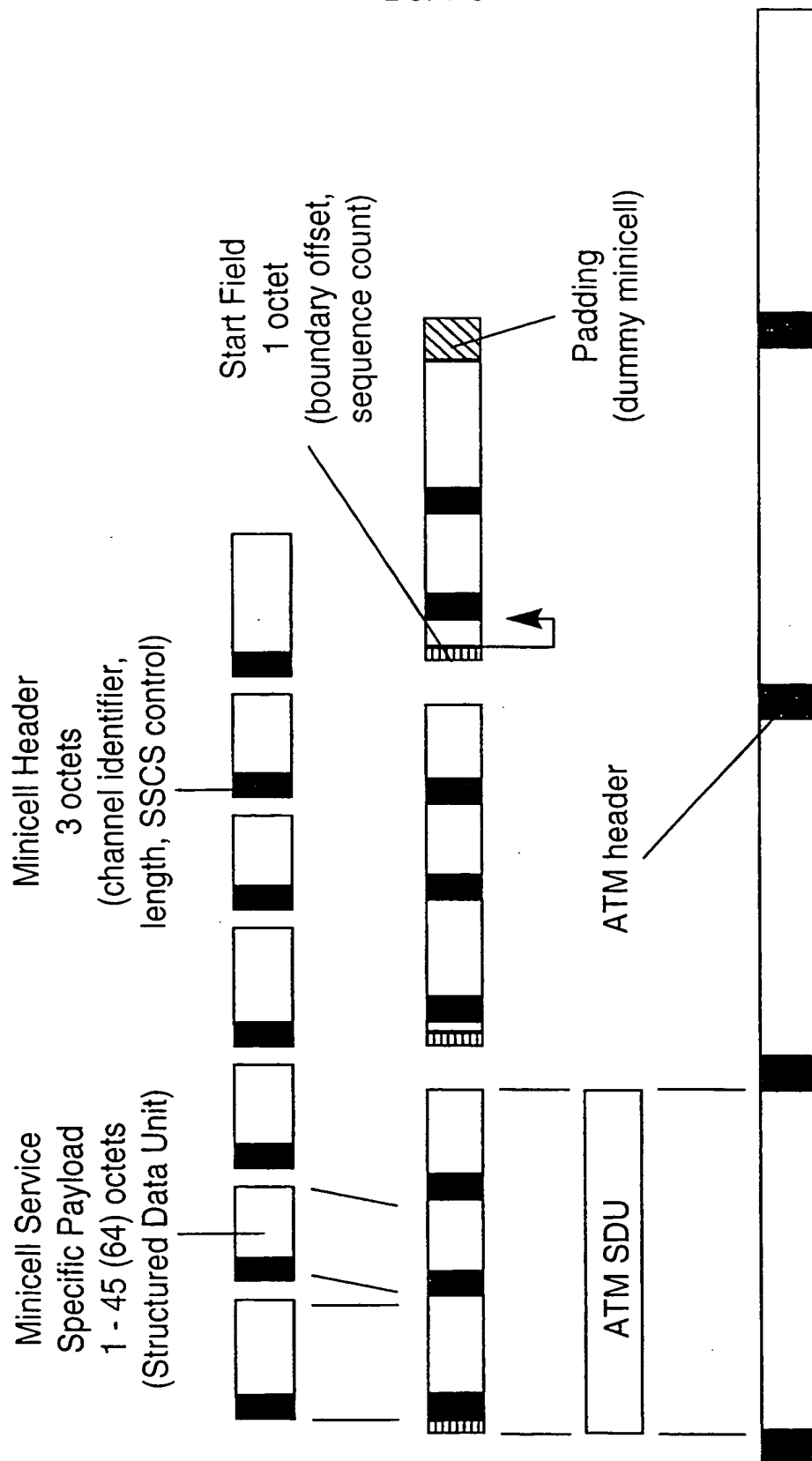
*Figure 8*



9/10

*Figure 9*

10/10



*Figure 10*

# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Internat. Application No

PCT/GB 98/01142

**A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER**  
IPC 6 H04011/04 H04B7/185

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

**B. FIELDS SEARCHED**

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 6 H04Q H04B H04L

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

**C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT**

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
P, X	MAUGER R ET AL: "QOS GUARANTEES FOR MULTIMEDIA SERVICES ON A TDMA-BASED SATELLITE NETWORK" IEEE COMMUNICATIONS MAGAZINE, vol. 35, no. 7, July 1997, pages 56-58, 63 - 65, XP000695132 see the whole document ---	1-10
X	WERNER M ET AL: "ATM-BASED ROUTING IN LEO/MEO SATELLITE NETWORKS WITH INTERSATELLITELINKS" IEEE JOURNAL ON SELECTED AREAS IN COMMUNICATIONS, vol. 15, no. 1, January 1997, pages 69-82, XP000637400 see sections III and IV ---	1-10
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Date of the actual completion of the international search

3 September 1998

Date of mailing of the international search report

11/09/1998

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# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Internat. Application No.

PCT/GB 98/01142

## C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	EP 0 748 142 A (PLESSEY TELECOMM) 11 December 1996 see column 4, line 9 - column 5, line 2; claims 1-10 ----	1-10
A	MANKARIOUS R R: "A FULL MESH ASYNCHRONOUS TRANSFER MODE (ATM) SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK" PROCEEDINGS OF THE MILITARY COMMUNICATIONS CONFERENCE (MILCOM), SAN DIEGO, NOV. 6 - 8, 1995, vol. VOL. 1, 6 November 1995, pages 11-15, XP000580737 INSTITUTE OF ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONICS ENGINEERS see sections II and III D ----	1-10
A	SHUJI TASAKA: "LINK-LEVEL CONNECTION CONTROL SCHEMES IN A HIGH-SPEED SATELLITE DATA NETWORK: A PERFORMANCE COMPARISON" IEEE JOURNAL ON SELECTED AREAS IN COMMUNICATIONS, vol. 10, no. 2, 1 February 1992, pages 437-446, XP000272924 see section II -----	1-10

### Information on patent family members

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